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THE PROGRESS OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

FRANCE and the United States are by common consent to-day regarded as the two most prosperous countries on the face of the earth. As the French and American people have many patriotic associations and traditions in common, and as their institutions are, in the main, very much alike, it is but natural that each should be interested in whatever concerns the condition and welfare of the other. Just at this time, when the real governing power of France has been called to a position of responsibility, in the person of M. Gambetta, there seems to be a special desire, on this side the ocean, to know whether or not the French Republic is definitively established, with the prospect of permanency.

I have thought that possibly a somewhat detailed statement of the progress of the French people toward republican ideas and popular government, since the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, might be interesting to some readers.

At the fall of the Empire, it is certain that the popular sentiment of France was anti-republican. Only two months before the declaration of war,—May 8, 1870,—a plebiscite gave the following result :

For the Imperial Government.....	7,350,142
Against	1,538,825

In the Chamber of Deputies which voted the declaration of war,—a body which had been elected in a time of profound peace and perfect quiet, and without conspicuous Government pressure,—the opposition to the Empire, republican and otherwise, constituted only a small minority. At that time there was no reason to doubt that the Emperor was firmly seated upon his throne, and that his son, the Prince Imperial, would be his heir and successor. But a madness, not unlike that which led the great

Napoleon to his ruin, seems to have taken possession of the imperial nephew. A pretext for war was found, and as the event proved, the very existence of the Empire was staked upon the hazard of battle, at a time when the French army was in no way, by reason of its numbers or its discipline, prepared to contend with the well-drilled and ably commanded legions of Germany. The first disasters of the war staggered and stunned the Imperial party; the catastrophe of Sedan put an end to it forever, as a permanent controlling power in the land. Had the French army been successful, there would have been no French Republic to-day.

The revolution of September 4, 1870, was the work of the Republicans, as at that time they alone had an organization in Paris. Had this party been in a condition to retrieve promptly the ill-fortune of the Emperor and his army, the progress of republicanism would have been rapid. But military disasters continued; the prestige of the new party was destroyed for the time; when the National Assembly of 1871 met to decide the question of peace or war, the old monarchical spirit of France had regained its influence over a majority of the hearts and minds of the people.

The Assembly met at Bordeaux, on the 12th of February. All the parties were represented in that body. The Republican group was the largest, but the Legitimists, the Orleanists, the Bonapartists, the Clericals, and the Conservatives of all shades had the majority.

M. Thiers, who had with great energy opposed the war from the beginning, naturally became the leading spirit of this Assembly, and was chosen chief executive February 17, 1871.

The Assembly had been elected with no definite powers, and for no determinate time, but with the special mission of deciding for the continuance of war or for making peace. At first, it seemed disposed to confine itself to that object alone, and M. Thiers declared from the tribune that the question of a constitution would not be touched, and that his government would remain neutral between all parties.

But gradually the Assembly, which was conscious of its power, assumed all authority, and the monarchical spirit by which it was animated displayed itself broadly.

M. Thiers, seeing clearly that the republican idea was making headway in the country, and among the masses, drew nearer

to the republican side. From this moment, counter political currents were everywhere seen,—one Republican, comparatively weak in the Assembly, but constantly gaining strength in the country,—the other Monarchical, strong in the Assembly, but impotent for controlling results.

Important events followed each other in rapid succession. In July and August, 1871, the Republicans were successful in the municipal elections, and in the partial election to fill vacancies in the Chamber of Deputies. The Monarchists were alarmed, and opened negotiations for the fusion of the two branches of the Bourbon family. In December, 1871, the Orleans Princes entered the Assembly, and in February, 1872, M. Rouher became leader of the Bonapartists. In June, 1872, in another partial election for members of the Chamber, the Republicans were again successful. Shortly after, a delegation of the Right waited upon M. Thiers, and represented to him the absolute necessity of giving the Monarchists and Conservatives a larger share in the administration of the Government. M. Thiers made polite excuses, and delayed action to gain time. On the 13th of December, 1872, he promulgated a message, in which he stated that the republican idea, after having been a source of trouble, was entering deeper and deeper into the hearts and minds of the people, and he suggested the permanent establishment of republican institutions. In the stormy sittings of the Assembly which followed this message, M. Thiers declared, with great emphasis, that henceforth a monarchy in France was impossible, and he defied the Right to establish one. November 29th, a proposition was made for the establishment of a Conservative government, which should oppose the alarming tendency of the time. The Government carried the day by only twenty-seven majority, and at the close of the year 1872, while the Republicans were still in power, the members of the Right were bold and determined. On the 5th of December, 1872, the Monarchists appointed a committee of thirty, to consider the question of the organization of a government, and on March 13, 1873, this committee reported a proposition to close the tribune of the Assembly to M. Thiers, which was carried by a vote of four hundred and seven to two hundred and twenty-five. On the 4th of April, M. Buffet, the leader of the Monarchists, was chosen President of the Assembly, by a vote of three hundred and four to two hundred and eighty-five, in place of M. Grévy, who had resigned. At the election to fill

vacancies in the Chamber, in April and May, the Republicans carried a majority, whereupon the Right, becoming more alarmed, effected a coalition between the Legitimists, Orleanists, and Bonapartists. May 20th, M. Buffet was reëlected President of the Assembly by three hundred and fifty-nine to two hundred and eighty-nine. The coalition then interpellated the Government upon its policy, and as to the necessity of defending society against its enemies. On the 24th of May, an order of the day censuring M. Thiers was voted by three hundred and sixty against three hundred and forty-four, whereupon he tendered his resignation, and Marshal MacMahon was elected to his place by three hundred and ninety votes. May 25, 1873, was constituted the first cabinet of the Marshal, known as the M. de Broglie cabinet. In August, 1873, the Orleans Princes made formal submission to the Count de Chambord, and at a meeting of the leaders of the Right, it was decided to establish the monarchy, the Marshal having caused it to be known that he would not interfere with, but would obey, the will of the Assembly. On the 27th of October, however, was published the famous letter of Count de Chambord, announcing that he would never so far reconcile himself to the Revolution as to recognize its tricolored flag. This letter produced consternation in the ranks of the Monarchists, as they knew it would be impossible to induce the country to accept and adopt the white flag of the Legitimist party. All their efforts were paralyzed. The proud and chivalric Prince, who had come secretly to Versailles to take possession of the Government, after he should have been proclaimed king by the Assembly, was compelled to retire discomfited, and to bid farewell forever to all hope of attaining the throne of his ancestors.

As it was impossible for the Right to agree upon any definitive monarchical government, a provisional arrangement was made for a government, republican in form, but really monarchical, without being hereditary. November 20, 1873, the Septennate was agreed to, which gave power to the Marshal for seven years. November 30th, a committee of thirty—containing but two Republicans—was appointed to consider and report upon the constitutional laws. At the end of the year 1873, the coalition seemed to have complete control of the Assembly.

At the beginning of the year 1874, serious differences existing between the Legitimists and Orleanists, and many Repub-

lican office-holders, by reason of inexperience, having proved incompetent for their duties, the Bonapartists seemed to be gaining in strength and influence. In June, the motion of the Marquis de la Roche-Jacquelin, to reëstablish the monarchy, was voted down by a large majority. On the 30th of November following, at the new session, the pressure of public opinion compelled the Assembly to consider the question of the constitutional laws. The moderate members of the Right felt that something must be done, but the extreme Monarchists and the Bonapartists were unwilling to yield anything. In January, 1875, the intrigues of the Bonapartist party compelled a union of the Center Right and Center Left,—the moderate Monarchists and Republicans,—and this group took the lead of the Assembly. On the 30th of January, 1875, a member of the Right Center moved that the Republic be declared the Government of France. This motion was carried by a majority of *one single vote*. February 25th, the constitutional laws were adopted, organizing France into a Republic, with two Chambers, and a President, chosen by them in congress assembled, for seven years. December 30, 1875, the Assembly pronounced its own dissolution, after having elected seventy-five life senators, among whom were a large number of leading Republicans, that party having formed a coalition with the Legitimists against the Orleanists and Bonapartists.

The general election of February, 1876, resulted in giving a good working majority to the Republicans. In March a Republican cabinet was formed, with M. Dufaure at its head. This cabinet was eminently conservative, but continued in power only a short time, and fell in consequence of its opposition to the amnesty measures, upon which question it was defeated in both houses. In December the Jules Simon ministry was constituted, less conservative than the former, but conciliatory. Marshal MacMahon, acting under influences hostile to the Republic, and notably under the inspiration of the Duke de Broglie, put himself in opposition to his cabinet. On the 16th of May, 1877, M. Simon and his colleagues resigned, and on the following day the Broglie-Fourtou ministry was organized. This cabinet was very far from representing the sentiments of the majority. Three hundred and sixty-three Republican members issued a manifesto denouncing the policy and tendency of the administration, and subsequently voted a severe order of the day against

the Government. The cabinet resisted, and asked the Senate to consent to a dissolution of the Assembly, which was agreed to, and the Assembly was dissolved June 25, 1877. The general election in October following resulted in the return of every one of the three hundred and sixty-three, and in an increased Republican majority. The cabinet then resigned, and a business ministry was formed for the moment. In the meantime, rumors were everywhere current that a *coup d'état* was in contemplation. How far such a project was matured and agreed upon will, perhaps, never be known. But, at all events, the Marshal yielded at last to the sentiment of the country, and called to his assistance moderate Republicans of standing and influence. For the second time, M. Dufaure was invited to form a cabinet. He had been a life-long Monarchist, but, like M. Thiers and Barthélemy St. Hilaire, had been won over to the Republican faith, and he now took a decided stand with the majority. M. Waddington was called to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In January, 1878, many changes were made in the home and diplomatic service. Out of two hundred and seventy-five sub-prefects, two hundred and sixty-four were removed, and Republicans appointed in their places. Many elections of Monarchists and Imperialists were annulled, and, in nearly every instance, Republicans were chosen to fill the vacancies. In February, 1878, the Orleanist group of the Senate voluntarily dissolved, and a majority of its members went over to the Republican side. Many Bonapartists also gave in their adherence to the Government, announcing that the time had come when their party must recognize the fact that the Republic was established.

During the year 1878, public attention was largely attracted away from political matters by the great Paris Exposition, which continued for six months. In January, 1879, an election was held for the renewal of one-third of the elective members of the Senate. Out of eighty-two the Republicans carried all but sixteen, the Bonapartists securing only two members.

As can be readily understood, all this time the Radicals were gaining strength and courage. They declared themselves dissatisfied with the moderate and conservative programme of the ministry. The Dufaure cabinet, acting under the pressure of public opinion, and perhaps desiring to conciliate the Radical element, insisted upon the removal of ten of the generals commanding the principal divisions of the army. These generals were the

old companions in arms and friends of Marshal MacMahon. He felt that he could not, with self-respect, consent to their displacement. Besides this, he had yielded too much to be in favor with the Monarchical and Imperial parties, and not enough to satisfy the Republicans. He seemed almost deserted, and was both disheartened and disgusted. He was essentially a soldier, and was tired and worn with the cares and annoyances of a position for which he never claimed to have any special qualifications. Accordingly, on the 30th of January, 1879, the Marshal tendered his resignation. On the same day, the Senate and Chamber assembled and elected M. Grévy President of the Republic for seven years. He received five hundred and sixty-three votes out of six hundred and sixty-two. This important and unexpected change took place in an orderly and dignified manner, without disturbance or excitement of any kind, and now at last the executive department was in the hands of the Republican party. M. Grévy was in full sympathy with the majority of the Chambers and with the sentiment of the country. In his first message, he declared that he would conform his action to the decision of the two houses, whose will he would not oppose. February 4, 1879, M. Waddington succeeded M. Dufaure as the head of the cabinet, the latter having resigned on account of his age and weariness of official cares.

The Radicals now entered upon an active campaign in favor of full amnesty for all those who had taken part in the insurrection of 1871. The Parisian press was filled with able articles advocating the measure, and the Municipal Council pronounced in its favor. Louis Blanc, Clémenceau, Victor Hugo, Locroy, and others advocated its adoption. A liberal bill, not satisfactory to the Radicals, was passed by the Chambers, after which the amnestied communists returned to France, and were warmly received by the people.

The Radicals then insisted upon the impeachment of the ministry of the 16th of May. The measure was opposed by the Government, and was lost on a final vote in the Chambers by three hundred and seventeen to one hundred and fifty-nine.

In June, 1879, the sad death of the Prince Imperial hopelessly divided the Bonapartist party, many of its members refusing to accept the leadership of Prince Jerome Napoleon.

On the 18th of June, 1879, the Government feeling strong enough to protect itself in the city of Paris, the two Chambers

repealed the article of the Constitution fixing the seat of government at Versailles, and in November following the Administration was transferred to Paris, where the Chambers now hold their sittings.

In January, 1880, the Waddington cabinet, having been attacked and denounced by the Radicals for too much timidity, indecision, and forbearance toward the enemies of the Republic, the ministry resigned, and was succeeded by the cabinet of M. de Freycinet.

In February, the proposition of Louis Blanc for full amnesty to all the communists was rejected, but the Radical press became more and more aggressive.

In this and the following month, a serious conflict arose between the Senate and Chamber, upon the question of the educational laws and the religious congregations. The Catholic congregations of France had become very numerous—some established by authority of law, others, such as the Jesuits, having no legal standing, this last-named order having been prohibited by old and almost forgotten decrees and laws, which had not been revoked or repealed. Jules Ferry presented to the Chamber of Deputies an elaborate bill on public education, article seventh of which declared that the religious congregations not authorized (aiming particularly at the Jesuits, who had large and successful colleges and schools) should not be allowed to teach. The proposition was carried in the Chamber of Deputies, but was defeated in the Senate, under the leadership of Jules Simon.

The opposition to the Jesuits was intensified in consequence of their alleged hostility to republican institutions. Many thoughtful and earnest Republicans, however, have doubted the wisdom of this measure, and it certainly is not in accordance with American ideas as to liberty of conscience and toleration of religious practices.

When the prohibitory article failed in the Senate, the cabinet declared that it would protect itself and society against the evil spirit of the Jesuits, by enforcing the ancient decrees against that order. On March 29th a decree was promulgated, ordering the Jesuits to dissolve their association and to close their schools within three months. The other unauthorized societies were directed to solicit proper authorization, and to qualify themselves for that purpose.

The Jesuits having refused to yield, except to force, on the 30th of June, 1880, all their schools, colleges, and religious establishments were forcibly entered by the police, supported by the army, and their inmates were summarily ejected.

This decree created great excitement at the time, but has since been acquiesced in, even where it is not regarded as just, wise, or expedient—the duty of the Republic to protect itself, even against a religious order, being in most minds the paramount consideration.

In July, 1880, M. Gambetta for the first time announced himself in favor of full amnesty to all the communists, he believing that the time had come when the measure could be safely adopted without endangering society. After an able speech from him, it was voted by three hundred and twelve to one hundred and thirty-six.

In August, at an election for the Councils General, in the departments, out of fourteen hundred and thirty-three Counselors the Republicans carried one thousand and twenty-three.

In September, M. de Freycinet, while endeavoring to find some accommodation of the educational question, and to conciliate the religious congregations, found himself in disagreement with other members of the cabinet, and tendered his resignation. Whereupon, M. Jules Ferry, the author of the religious decree, was called upon to form a ministry, M. Gambetta having declined to do so.

In November, the decrees against the unauthorized societies other than the Jesuits were enforced, amidst much public excitement.

Subsequently, a law for compulsory education was enacted.

At the general election of August 21, 1881, for members of the Chamber of Deputies, the Republicans succeeded in securing four hundred and fifty-seven, while the Bonapartists elected only forty-seven, and the Legitimists and Orleanists together only forty-three. This result shows that the Republican cause was not weakened by the action of the Government against the religious orders.

After this election, public sentiment peremptorily called upon M. Gambetta to assume a position of responsibility, and on November 14, 1881, having been invited by the President, he consented to construct a cabinet, and himself assumed the duties of Minister for Foreign Affairs.

M. Gambetta, perhaps, more fully than any other statesman of France, represents the genius, opinions, and aspirations of his countrymen. He is a powerful man, physically and mentally; is possessed of untiring energy, indomitable will, lofty ambition, and great courage. There is a personal magnetism about him, and a force of character which, assisted by the magic of his entrancing eloquence, bears down or sweeps away all opposition. He has grown conservative in proportion as his responsibilities and power have increased. His influence has long directed the course of events, and his governing hand is now everywhere recognized. That he is intensely ambitious cannot be doubted, but he identifies his own personal reputation with the permanency and welfare of the Republic. What may be the effect upon him of this concentration of power and influence in his own hands, it is difficult to say. It is hoped, however, and believed, that he will be governed by patriotic motives and considerations.

Thus may be seen the successive steps by which France has advanced from the imperial *régime* of 1870 to the popular government and liberal institutions of to-day. The people, by an overwhelming majority, are devoted to the Republic. They have seen their country recover from the disasters of the Franco-Prussian war, with a facility and to a degree which has astonished the world. They have seen France rise up from her prostrate and seemingly hopeless condition to assume her place again as one of the great powers of Europe. They have witnessed a financial prosperity, under the policy of peace and development, which has made the citizens of the Republic happy and the country rich and powerful. They have seen their Government, while avoiding unnecessary foreign complications, asserting its influence in the world's affairs; extending its trade and commerce, and enhancing prosperity by virtue of its commercial treaties, and otherwise; adding to its domain by the acquisition of broad and fertile territory in North Africa, a large proportion of which it is undoubtedly destined to control; augmenting and re-organizing the army, until it little resembles that with which Napoleon the Third attempted the conquest of Germany; the people left to pursue unmolested the vocations of civil life,—to enjoy the present and to provide for the future.

And seeing all this, what wonder that the people have confidence in their institutions and in the leaders who direct them? As a consequence, there have for years been no violent outbreaks,

and few social disturbances. France is at peace, and wishes to remain so.

It would not be true to say that the French idea of Democracy is the same as that which prevails in the United States,—perhaps it can never be altogether so. Frenchmen naturally remember that their territorial unity and national glory have largely been inherited from their kings; the traditions of the empire still linger in their minds; they are fond of amusement and display, and have not forgotten the glittering pageantry and the fascinating gayeties of their royal courts; they do not want a King or an Emperor again, but the monarchical idea is ever present with them, and their Republic is made to conform somewhat to this idea. For instance, many of the leaders have advocated the abolition of the Senate, so that all power might be vested in one grand Assembly, the members of which should be elected by large constituencies, upon a general ticket. The tendency of such a policy would be to consolidate the power of the Republic in a few hands. To-day, under such an arrangement, the government would be that of one man—M. Gambetta. There is reason to believe, however, that the better judgment of the nation will preserve all the checks upon absolute or personal power which now exist, and that there will be no centralization of authority. This possibility, nevertheless, constitutes a danger to which the more thoughtful minds of France are already directed, with more or less of painful apprehension.

The senatorial elections of January 8, 1882, in which the Republicans carried sixty-four and the Conservatives fifteen,—a Republican gain of twenty-two,—places the Senate in full harmony with the Chamber of Deputies, so that the national Republican majority in both houses is unassailable by the extremists of either party. This result is likely to silence all serious opposition to the Senate as a branch of the legislative authority for the present.

There is also a Radical element in France, constantly bent upon extreme measures, having little respect for constituted or delegated authority, and caring not much for moral or religious safeguards. The leaders of this faction are able and brilliant, capable of inflaming the public mind, unscrupulous in their methods, and dangerous in their tendency. Fortunately they are in a small minority, and hence have not been able seriously to embarrass the administration of affairs, though their finger-

marks will be found upon the most questionable legislation of the Republican Chambers.

Recognizing the two dangers,—centralization, or one-man power, on the one hand, and the tendency to extreme radicalism on the other,—it may yet be said that the French Republic to-day has a good though not perfect Constitution, generally wise laws, an honest and patriotic administration, and every prospect of permanency, development, and success. It is as firmly established as any monarchical government in Europe.

In closing this article, the thought naturally suggests itself that the example of two great Republics, like France and the United States, cannot be lost to the world. Their prosperity, beyond all comparison with that of other nations, cannot fail to commend democratic institutions to the people of all lands. The spirit of unrest is abroad in the monarchical countries. The revolutionary feeling finds an abnormal expression among the Nihilists of Russia, the Socialists of Germany, and in organized secret societies elsewhere. But the true spirit of republicanism, the genius of free government, is everywhere making its way, and finds able and influential advocates in all parts of Europe.

Our sympathies are with the Republic of France in her brave, persistent, and successful efforts to perfect and sustain a government, by and for the people, founded upon justice, and maintained with integrity and patriotism.

EDWARD F. NOYES.